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Viewing cable 06DUBAI1904, SITUATION IN IRAN'S KHUZESTAN AND REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cable's unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g.

#06DUBAI1904.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06DUBAI1904	2006-04-04 14:33	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET	Consulate Dubai

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/04/17/112290/state-department-cables-reveal.html>

VZCZCXRO1791
PP RUEHBC RUEHKUK RUEHMOS
DE RUEHDE #1904/01 0941433
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
P R 041433Z APR 06
FM AMCONSUL DUBAI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9579
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 2511
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 DUBAI 001904

SIPDIS

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LONDON FOR TSOU, PARIS FOR ZEYA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/4/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [SOCI](#)
SUBJECT: SITUATION IN IRAN'S KHUZESTAN AND REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT

DUBAI 00001904 001.2 OF 003

CLASSIFIED BY: Jason L Davis, Consul General, Dubai, UAE.
REASON: 1.4 (d)

1.(U) This is an action request -- see para 15-16.

2.(S) Summary: In the past two weeks ConGenoffs have had two sets of meetings with people claiming to be persecuted human rights activists from Iran's Arab Khuzestan region. The first meeting was with two activists in UAE to seek political asylum. The second two say they are not seeking asylum but are requesting USG help publicizing the plight of their families held in prison in Iran and unspecified logistical support from the U.S. for their separatist movement. A London-based Khuzestan activist complained that Iran was settling Persians in Khuzestan, causing Ahwazi Arabs to emigrate. Meanwhile, another Khuzestan group, calling itself the Democratic Arabic Nation Organization, is requesting, via email, contact with the USG. Please see action request in para 16-18. End summary

British Ahwazi Friendship Society

3.(C) XXXXXXXXXXXX, treasurer of XXXXXXXXXXXX met PolEconChief while in Dubai February 27 to discuss the current situation in Khuzestan. He said

Khuzestan's Arabs have no lobbying power to rally international support for their cause, despite the fact that in his view, their situation is worse than that of the Palestinians, and despite the fact that the area produces 10 percent of OPEC output of oil (other sources claim 20%). He claimed that through land confiscation, Iran is setting up Persian settlements on their land and many Ahwazi Arabs are choosing to emigrate. XXXXXXXXXXXX said President Ahmadinejad's program or provincial outreach had no benefit for Khuzestan Arabs and that the IRGC had "no sympathy" for Arab Sunnis.

4.(C) Asked about the letter that sparked violence last year -- reputed to have been written in 1999 by an advisor to then President Khatami about policies to reduce the percentage of ethnic Arabs in Khuzestan -- XXXXXXXXXXXX said he does not believe government claims that the letter was fraudulent. This is because he sees the projects referenced in the letter being carried out. Asked his view of government claims of foreign assistance for attacks in Khuzestan, he said the government was trying to deny the truth that it is a local grass roots movement. That said, the British retain their influence in the region, based on their historical support for semi-independence for the region. XXXXXXXXXXXX claimed to have met with British FS Straw, which he said fanned the conspiracy rumors. He also said the group had met with Canadian officials.

5.(C) XXXXXXXXXXXX said the British Ahwazi Friendship Society is against the use of violence and is secular. The group suspects the Iranian government is behind the bombings over the past year in Khuzestan. It cooperates with the U.S.-based Ahwazi Human Rights Organization. He also mentioned ties to the Democratic Solidarity Party of Ahwaz (DPSA), which represents Ahwaz at the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO). He said the DPSA advocates a separation of mosque and state and a federalist system, and that it rejects pan-Arabism. The group is also part of the Congress of Nationalities for a Federal Iran, an umbrella organization based in London with Kurdish (Kurdistan Democratic Party and Komala), Azeri (Cultural Center for Azerbaijan), Balochi (People's Party of Baluchistan and another group), and Turkmen parties, as well as Ahwazi. According to XXXXXXXXXXXX, none of these groups advocates separatism. He mentioned that there are other small separatist groups in Khuzestan.

6.(C) XXXXXXXXXXXX said his group broadcasts into Iran one hour a week from California but that following the Persian New Year, it planned to expand broadcasting using satellite time leased by Kurdish groups.

7.(C) His argument for U.S. support for Ahwazi Arabs included the following points:

- Khuzestan is against Islamists and is the only place where Islamists would not win free elections
- Pan-Arabists have ignored us, so we don't like them
- Unlike most Arabs who do not like the U.S. because of its support for Israel, Ahwazi Arabs do not question Israel's right to exist
- If the U.S. helps them, its standing will rise in the region because the Arab world will see that it has helped Arabs
- Khuzestan is the only place in Iran where demonstrations occur monthly
- Ahwazi Arabs have good relations with anti-Iranian Iraqi Shia, as well as with Kurds.

Political Asylum Pleas

8.(S) Two men, XXXXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXXXXXX, came to ConGen Dubai March 28, having been referred to us by the Ahwazi Human Rights Organization, looking for political asylum. Details of their reports of human rights abuses in Khuzestan are reported septel. Conoff instructed them that we could not take action on their cases without a UNHCR review. One had already applied to UNHCR, but the other was reluctant to do, claiming fear of Iranian security presence in the UAE; however, he has since started the process. PolEconChief will follow up with UNHCR to track their cases.

Help for Imprisoned Families and More

9.(S) Two additional men showed up April 3, claiming to be Ahwazi political activists XXXXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXXXXXX and saying they were referred by the Ahwazi Human Rights Organization. They were accompanied by another man, who only identified himself as "Fareed" and said he lived in the UAE. A U.S. based Ahwaz human rights group had alerted post to the presence of these two activists in UAE, but they came without an appointment. They gave PolEconChief Internet reports from the British Ahwazi Friendship Society and Amnesty International regarding persecution of family members of activists in Khuzestan. We cannot confirm the identities of the two men we saw, but the one claiming to be XXXXXXXXXXXX said his wife and four-year-old son are currently in prison. AI reports XXXXXXXXXXXX has received threats his family will be tortured or killed if he

does not return. The man claiming to be XXXXXXXXXXXX said his wife was pregnant when she was detained and had apparently has since lost the child after being mistreated. AI reports that other women and children of activists are being held in similar situations. "Fareed" also spoke of a husband and wife, XXXXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXXXXXX, whom he said were being held together in prison, each forced to watch the other being abused. According to the British Ahwazi Friendship Society, none of the women has been charged with any crimes.

10.(S) "XXXXXXXXXXXX" said he was a teacher and had run for parliament, and was being persecuted for speaking out about Arab rights and democracy. "XXXXXXXXXXXX" only said he was a businessman and activist and gave no details of his activities. Both men denied any connection to recent bombings in Khuzestan.

11.(S) "Fareed" then asked for a follow-on meeting with an Arabic speaker, saying he and the other two men were not comfortable speaking Farsi. He also proposed they meet with "CIA" claiming they had information to give and also wanted support for their activities, which he said were in support of a separate state. He said they had heard the Iranian government make accusations that British and Americans were supporting them, and added that he "only wished it were so."

A Request for Contact

12.(S) A third group calling itself the Democratic Arabic Nation Organization (www.al-ahwaz.org) has been requesting, via email, a meeting with Embassy Abu Dhabi. (They say they do not want to come to Dubai because they fear the Iranian security presence here.) They too claim to have information to offer.

13.(S) According to a letter in Arabic sent by email, they claim to be a political party that calls for protection of human rights according to international standards, democracy, "and achieving all of our political, economic, and social goals using every available source." They claim responsibility for the April 15, 2005 "revolution" in Khuzestan that was "hailed" by the State Department, as well as responsible for the Ahwazi rebellion in 2002.

They say they seek support from the U.S. because:

- the U.S. has important interests in the area
- the U.S. has always driven democracy in the Middle East
- the best way to weaken the Iranian system is from within

14.(S) The group is offering documentation of human rights abuses to help the U.S. gain international support for its campaign against Iran. They write, "It is also certain that we shall require much support from your side for our case." They do not specify whether or not they are a separatist group, stating only that they want democracy "within our state." The letter says the group is requesting a meeting with a high level official with "decision-making ability," and warns that communication should be handled as classified, as "we continue to live in Ahwaz." The letter is signed XXXXXXXXXXXX.

Action Requests

15.(SBU) Post recommends the Department issue, in the appropriate venue, a statement on the overall situation in Khuzestan, criticizing in particular the reported mass displacement of Arabs, as well as the arrests of families, including young children, of political activists. (See Amnesty International Index: MDE 13/028/2006 for details)

16.(S) Additionally, Post requests general guidance on meetings with Ahwazi groups. The British Ahwazi Friendship Society in particular appears to be a well-established, legitimate group. Once the Iran watcher is in place in London, s/he could perhaps continue the contact. XXXXXXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXXXXXX, and Fareed called itself separatists but did not give any particular name to their group.

Should advocacy of separatism be a red-line for continuing contact with such groups/individuals? Should our response to requests for support be to suggest they partner with an international NGO? The possibility exists, of course, that the two "activists" may in fact be Iranian intelligence agents looking to identify their American counterparts and determine how the U.S. would react to such approaches. An Internet search revealed no photos of the two supposedly prominent political activists, only of their wives and children. Post also requests guidance for any follow-on action related to the Democratic Arabic Nation Organization, which could also be a front for Iranian intelligence. We have so far not responded to their letter. Checks done locally at post have revealed no information about the group.

DAVIS